

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### New Mexico Treatment Courts **Certification Project**



### 1. Why is there a certification process?

**The certification process is one element of a quality engagement infrastructure designed to assess the alignment of treatment court programs with best practice standards.**

Certification will help programs:

- \* Measure and ensure alignment with NM standards
- \* Use consistent, research based criteria for assessing quality
- \* Demonstrate congruence of programs with legislative funding priorities based on evidence-based practices
- \* Identify areas for improvement
- \* Inform the AOC of areas of needed resources, technical assistance, and training

### 2. How do we prepare for certification?

**Since certification measures alignment with the NM Treatment Court Standards approved by NM Supreme Court Order No. 21-8500-002, the best preparation for certification is to become very familiar with the standards.**

Some key aspects to readiness include:

- \* Completion of the *NM Treatment Court Quality Engagement Self-Check* survey found at this link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NM\\_Treatment-Court\\_Self-Check\\_2021](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NM_Treatment-Court_Self-Check_2021) or use the QR Code at right.
- \* Updated policies and procedures, reviewed by the team and signed by the presiding treatment court judge, that:
  - Reflect current operations
  - Reflect the *NM Treatment Court Standards*
- \* Updated / current MOUs signed by all team members that include areas of agreement found in the *NM Treatment Court standards*. See the *MOU Sample Template* for more information.
- \* Updated training logs or other training documentation for each team member that indicate recent professional development relative to the drug court model. See the various *Onboarding Professional Development Matrix* samples and sample training logs for additional information.



### 3. How do we know we are ready for certification?

**A program is ready for certification when the team is committed to the process and agrees to make best practices a priority.**

Certification is:

- \* A **process** wherein best practices are reviewed and areas of alignment, as well as potential gaps, are identified, reviewed, and addressed

- \* An **investment** in both your team's understanding of best practices and the application of best practices
- \* A **partnership** between the local treatment court and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to achieve alignment with the *NM Treatment Court Standards*

## 4. When can we start?

**Certification “windows” open quarterly throughout the year.**

Of course, programs can – and should – begin getting ready as soon as possible. Reviewing and revising policies and procedures can take some time, as can gathering training documents (and perhaps arranging the training), securing MOUs, and collecting other proof documents.

## 5. How long does the process take?

**The length of the process, to a large extent, depends upon the readiness of the program. The pre-application work described in the answer to question #2 can take several months if a program has to create procedures or is just beginning team training. Once the formal process has begun, it will generally take two to three months.**

Remember that the local program often decides when to apply for certification; however, movement toward best practices should be an ongoing endeavor.

## 6. What is the commitment from the team?

**Team involvement is an important aspect of the certification process. Although the biggest time commitment will likely be that of the coordinator, the process requires other team members to participate as well.**

Team involvement generally involves:

- \* Working together to complete the initial 82-question survey (this may take anywhere from 40 minutes to a couple of hours depending on how much discussion it generates)
- \* Each team member taking a 25-question anonymous survey (about 10 minutes)
- \* Certain team members taking an additional survey of between 5-10 questions (the judge, program manager, community supervision officer, and case manager)
- \* Reviewing and updating policies and procedures
- \* Reviewing and signing MOUs
- \* Receiving and/or documenting training

## 7. What are the benefits of being certified?

**Demonstration of alignment with the NM Treatment Court Standards and national best practices puts your program in the best possible place to see better outcomes and secure the confidence of policymakers, funding sources, the community, and your participants. Further, it allows you to meet the conditions required for continued operation.**

Additional benefits include:

- \* A media release from the AOC to your local media outlets recognizing your efforts and accomplishment as “Certified” or having received a “Provisional Certification”

- \* Recognition of your team at the NMADCP conference and in the *NM Problem Solving Courts Connection* newsletter
- \* Certification plaques to display in your courtroom, judge's chamber and coordinator's office
- \* Certification status is noted on the AOC annual report to the Supreme Court
- \* Certified courts are eligible to apply to become a *New Mexico Model Treatment Court*

## 8. How will certification be used?

**The primary function of certification is to demonstrate alignment with the *NM Treatment Court Standards*, so the certification process is used primarily as an education, development, and resource-identification tool.**

Functionally, certification will be used to:

- \* Recognize programs that are aligned with *NM Treatment Court Standards*
- \* Identify programs needing technical assistance
- \* Help programs identify areas they need to work on or develop further
- \* Assist the AOC in providing information and support to programs – the AOC will compile training and technical assistance needs based on a summary of certification applications
- \* Identify a select group of model courts to mentor new programs and provide technical assistance to existing courts

## 9. What if we cannot become certified?

**The certification process exists to certify worthy programs and to get all programs worthy of certification. For any treatment court seeking to follow the *NM Treatment Court Standards*, the question about certification is not “if,” but “when.”**

Some of the standards are easier to address than others and some of the standards may be aspirational for a time; however, consistent movement toward best practices benefits every stakeholder and becoming certified is simply a by-product of this movement.

## 10. What should we do when we are ready?

**When you are ready to begin, go to the Certification tab at <https://treatmentcourts.nmcourts.gov/> and open the “Getting Started” folder. All the instructions are there.**

The foundational steps include:

- \* Review the documents in the “Getting Started” folder, especially the *Overview & Instructions*, *Letter of Intent*, *Application*, and these *Frequently Asked Questions*.
- \* Complete the *Letter of Intent* and submit it to the AOC so they can get you scheduled during the next available certification window.
- \* Solicit the answers from your treatment provider and drug screener early as this often takes some time to complete. There are questions on the application as well as in the survey.
- \* Get a start on the survey by answering the basics for your team to review together. As you work through the survey, it will save your answers so you can return to it at any time *until you hit the “submit” button. Do not hit submit until you are completely finished with the survey*, simply close out of your browser window and the survey will be ready when you open it back up.
- \* Schedule a time for your team to complete the survey (remember this may take a while, but is important to the education of your team)

## 11. What, exactly, does the process look like?

**The process is generally completed in four or more phases over the course of up to 3 months as noted in the graphic and chart below.**

Specific dates will be provided during the *Pre-Window Webinar*. More detail regarding the process is included in the *002\_Cert- Instructions* document.

Project Activity	Notes
PROG: Confirmation / commitment to specific certification window	Beginning 3 months prior to certification window
AOC emails notice of pre-window webinar	
AOC: Final reminder of pre-window webinar	
AOC/PROG: Pre-window webinar	
PROG: Submits <i>Letter of Interest</i>	
AOC Opens Certification Window & sends <i>Quality Engagement Survey</i> link and Google Drive access	TWO WEEKS
Program submits <i>Application</i> to AOC NLT opening date	
AOC initial review of <i>Application</i>	
AOC acknowledges receipt and suitability of <i>Application</i>	
Online <i>Quality Engagement Survey</i> Submitted within 2-week window	
Document uploads to Google Drive within 2-week window	
AOC Acknowledges receipt and suitability of <i>Quality Engagement Survey</i> and document uploads or provides a list of additional items required	UP TO ONE MONTH
AOC completes & sends initial <i>Pending Items Reference Sheet</i>	
Program reviews <i>Pending Items Sheet</i> and responds to AOC	
AOC completes the full review of SUB #01 and sends <i>Scoring Sheet</i> to program	
Program continues to submit clarifying / pending items to AOC	UP TO ONE MONTH
AOC updates <i>Pending Items Reference Sheet</i>	
AOC completes a second full review (SUB #02) and sends <i>Scoring Sheet</i> to program	
Program continues to submit clarifying / pending items to AOC	UP TO TWO WEEKS (if needed)
AOC completes final review of additional documents & updated material (SUB #03)	
AOC discusses <i>Final Scoring Sheet</i> with Judge & Coordinator	
Program will be recognized as “Certified” or will receive a “Provisional Certification”	
Programs receiving a “Provisional Certification” will work with the AOC to create a project plan identifying how gaps and needs will be jointly addressed over the next year	UP TO TWO WEEKS (if needed)
AOC will acknowledge receipt and sufficiency of the project plan	
Program and AOC will participate in quarterly web conference check-ins to review the project plan until all conditions for certification have been met	UP TO ONE YEAR
Program will be recognized as “Certified” or will stand for certification again at the end of the year	